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U S A R M Y

# USAG Schinnen Tri-border News Notes



## Schinnen Holiday Party



Photo by LaDonna Davis

Top: Mr. and Mrs. Claus give Schinnen employees a warm welcome as they enter the 2005 annual Christmas party. Bottom: Schinnen employees feast on Dutch food (top) while listening to live musical acts, Brassban (second from top), Will Frenken & Annie Hochstenbach-Nieling (third down) and Thea Kollee (bottom).

By LaDonna Davis

Santa and Mrs. Claus greeted all USAG Schinnen employees to the 2005 annual Christmas party Dec. 12 in the Schinnen sports center.

The party gave Schinnen employees a chance to get together, commiserate outside of their duty stations, feast on some good food and celebrate the holiday season together.

While attendees indulged on a traditional Dutch meal, live musical acts kept everyone entertained throughout the afternoon.

The guest list included a young be-bop artist, a Dutch singing duet, a live orchestra, a singing guitarist and a singing Dutch soloist.

While the holiday party gave Schinnen employees a chance to relax and hang loose for an afternoon, it also gave many a time to reflect on what's important to them.

*What the Holiday means to them...*



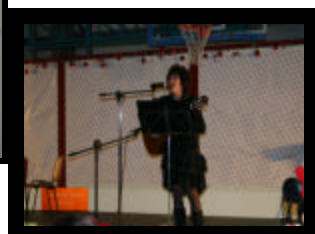
"I'm not religious, so to me it means peace on earth. It would be nice if everyone would be nice to everybody else." -Franz Brorens, Housing Referral Officer



"A time to spend with your family, loved ones and good friends, and to also do more good deeds than you normally do the rest of the year to make someone else's life a little happier." - Ada Cota, Security Manager



"We all have to remember how important it is to give and not receive." -Patricia Bigelow, Central Texas College field representative.



# Commander's holiday safety message



As the winter holiday season approaches, I would like to take this opportunity to remind each of you to keep safety first and foremost in all you do this holiday season.

This time of year can be deadly and the month of December is particularly dangerous. Approach this season as you would any mission. Plan ahead, conduct composite risk management and execute to standard.

Leaders and supervisors, engage your soldiers with under the oak tree counseling to help them identify and mitigate the hazards associated with this time of year. Emphasize the importance of individual responsibility and let them know that the choices they make effect not only themselves, but their family, friends and coworkers as well.

Good soldiers make tough decisions, but good soldiers make the right decisions. I am counting on all of you to make decisions that keep you and those you care about safe. I wish you many blessings, much peace and continued happiness today and all through the year.

Have a happy and safe holiday season.

Rick Richardson

Lt. Col. U.S. Army

Commanding

**ATTENTION:** There is a possibility that your refrigerator will malfunction during cold weather when installed in an unheated area, e.g. a garage. If the ambient temperature outside your refrigerator is colder than inside, the refrigerator will automatically switch to the DEFROST mode of operation. This may happen at approximately 40 degrees Fahrenheit (5 degrees Celsius) ambient temperature. To avoid problems it is recommended that you move the refrigerator to a heated location. For additional information please call the DPW Furnishings Management Branch, QA section at 360-7389 or Commercial (0031) 046-4437389

## 2006 Scholarships for Military Children applications available

The Scholarships for Military Children program begins its sixth year rewarding academic excellence.

Applications, are available now at the Schinnen Commissary and must be returned by close of business Feb. 22, 2006.

Since its inception in 2000, the program has awarded \$1,500 scholarships to nearly 2,500 military children through the generosity of manufacturers and businesses that sell groceries in commissaries.

Applications, eligibility and other information for the 2006 SFMC program are also available online at <http://www.militaryscholar.org> or through a link at <http://www.commissaries.com>, the Defense Commissary Agency's customer Web site.

At least one \$1,500 scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

The program is opened to unmarried children under the age of 21 (23 if enrolled in school) of active duty personnel, Reserve, Guard and retired military.

# Support for military families welcome anytime of year

By Bonnie Powell

During the holidays many Americans open their purse strings to help those in need, but the “Gift of Groceries” and Scholarships for Military Children are programs that can help military families all year round.

Since the “Gift of Groceries” program began in 2002, the general public has been able to purchase commissary gift certificates to give to military friends and family, as well as to purchase and donate to charitable organizations assisting military families. The certificates can be purchased through a link at <http://www.commissaries.com> or by calling 1-877-770-GIFT.

“Donations of commissary gift certificates to worldwide charitable organizations such as the Air Force Aid Society, Fisher House Foundation, and the USO have totaled over \$200,000 in the last three years,” said Patrick B. Nixon, chief executive officer and acting director of the Defense Commissary Agency. That’s in addition to the thousands of dollars in gift certificates that have been purchased and donated through installation charities.

“Increasingly, many installation holiday food programs seem to be utilizing commissary gift certificates as well,” said Nixon. “Since the commissary benefit saves shoppers an average of 30 percent or more over commercial grocery stores, the commissary certificates have more buying power.” A valuable military benefit, com-

missaries provide groceries “at cost” to military active duty, Guard and Reserve, and retirees at 268 locations worldwide.

A recent addition to the gift certificate donation program is “Operation Home front,” a nonprofit volunteer organization that assists military families with emergency needs. Operation Home front has 31 chapters in the U.S. and has handled over 20,000 cases ranging from car repairs to food assistance since 2002. It is affiliated with *CinCHouse.com*, a nonprofit organization created to help military wives and women in the military manage day-to-day life.

According to Amy Palmer, executive vice president of Operation Home front, commissary gift certificates are a more efficient way for them to help families, giving the families the flexibility to shop for the food they need. More information on Operation Home front and *CinCHouse.com* can be found at <http://www.operationhomefront.net> or <http://www.cinchouse.com>.

Commissary gift certificates are made possible through a business agreement with CertifiChecks Inc., at no cost to the federal government. Anyone can buy the certificates, but only authorized commissary shoppers can spend them. There is a small charge for handling, printing and shipping the certificates.

The general public can also help send outstanding military children to col-

lege. The Scholarships for Military Children program has awarded nearly \$4 million in scholarships to about 2,500 students since the program began in 2000. The program administrator, Fisher House Foundation, accepts public donations for scholarships at <http://www.militaryscholar.org>. Since program costs are absorbed by Fisher House Foundation, every dollar donated goes to fund the \$1,500 scholarships. Applications and information on eligibility are available online at <http://www.militaryscholar.org>.

The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of 30 percent or more on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$2,700 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.



# USAG Schinnen drinking water notification

## *Directorate of Public Works Environmental Office*

The US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (CHPPM) – Europe performed a drinking water surveillance program at the USAG Schinnen on 13 and 20-21 July and 27 September 2005. The purpose was to determine if the chemical and physical quality of drinking water supplied to the USAG Schinnen community complies with the requirements established in the Final Governing Standards (FGS) for The Netherlands and Germany.

The CHPPM-Europe concluded the following in regard to the quality of the drinking water for the public water systems monitored during this survey: The water supplied to the USAG Schinnen communities is considered potable. Nitrates detected at the SSO exceeded 50 percent of the maximum contaminant level (MCL); therefore, increased monitoring is required in accordance with the FGS The Netherlands. The 950<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company Bremerhaven has a volatile organic compounds (VOC) concentration above 0.0005 mg/L; therefore, increased monitoring is required in accordance with the FGS for Germany. The water provided to the Supply Support Offices (SSO), Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) Rotterdam, and 950<sup>th</sup> U. S. Army Transportation Company Bremerhaven is not disinfected as required by the FGS for The Netherlands. The Schinnen Emma Mine Complex complied with the action levels for lead and copper as required by FGS The Netherlands and will proceed to triennial monitoring.

### **Recommendations CHPPM-Europe:**

- Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Environmental Management Office (EMO) will conduct quarterly monitoring at the SSO for nitrates.
- DPW EMO will conduct quarterly monitoring at the 950<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company Bremerhaven for VOCs. A minimum of two samples per quarter is required.
- Disinfect the water supplied to the Schinnen SSO, Surface Deployment and Distribution Command

(SDDC) Rotterdam, and the 950<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company Bremerhaven locations in accordance with the FGS for The Netherlands and Germany, and guidance from the Command Surgeon. Ensure detectable chlorine residual is maintained throughout these water distribution systems. A chlorination unit for the SSO is programmed for FY06.

- Conduct the next triennial lead and copper monitoring at the Schinnen Emma Mine Complex in FY08 in accordance with the FGS The Netherlands. Collect a minimum of five samples during the FY08 sampling event. The DPW EMO has already programmed the lead and copper monitoring for FY08.

## **New Parent Education & Support Program**

### **HOME VISITS:**

Personal visits to your home for childbirth preparation,

Breastfeeding, postpartum/newborn care, infant development, parenting and disciplining your child. Call for an appointment today!!!

### **PLAY MORNINGS:**

Join us every Thursday morning from 9:30-11:30 in the Sports Center at Schinnen.

Once a month -**BABY GOODS EXCHANGE!!!** Swap infant and toddlers stuff with other families during play group( 22 Dec, 26 Jan & 23 Feb).

### **OB ORIENTATION:**

Learn about giving birth in the Netherlands/Germany and about your community resources. Next date: 7 Mar 2006—10:00-12:00 at the GK clinic conference room.

### **BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP:**

Join us to learn more about breastfeeding. Meets once a month on the 3rd Wednesday at the ACS conference room at Schinnen—10:00—11:00 (21 Dec, 18 Jan & 15 Feb)

### **HEERLEN HOSPITAL TOURS:**

English lead tours of the hospital. Transportation provided from Schinnen. 12:00-16:00—Next tour Feb 2006. Registration with NPESP Mandatory.

**CALL ELIZABETH FOSTER @ 0031(0)46-443-7335/DSN 360-7335**

## Leisure Activities ~ by Rita Hoefnagels

**Through Dec. 30 and Jan. 3-8:** *Winter Wonderland* at the castle and gardens in Arcen (NL). The park is transformed in a wonderful world of winter scenes with lots to do for the whole family. Open: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Entry: € 8, children (4-14) €4. Information: [www.kasteeltuinen.nl](http://www.kasteeltuinen.nl) or call 31 (0)77-4731882.

**Dec. 30:** *Christmas Market* at Groenplaats in the center of Antwerpen (BE).

**Dec. 30-31, Jan. 2-8, 14-15 and 21-22:** *Winter Efteling* in Kaastheuvel near Tilburg (NL). At the attractive illuminated fairy tale and amusement park visitors will find real old-fashion winter fun with live entertainment and lots of special winter food. The majority of attractions are open as well. Open daily 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Entry: €24.

**Through Dec. 31:** *De Ontdekking van de Wereld (The discovery of the World)* at Scheepsvaartmuseum in Amsterdam (NL). An exhibition on Dutch explorers with on display objects and decors from Nova Zembla, New York, Suriname, Cape Good Hope, the Dutch

East Indies and Australia. Entry: 7.50 Euro.

*Christmas Market in a Cave*, an attractive fair at Gemeentegrot (cave) in the center of Valkenburg (NL). Open on weekdays, noon-9 p.m. and on weekends, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Entry: 3.50 Euro; children 1.75 Euro.

**Through Jan. 1:** *European Christmas Market* at Grote Markt, Sint-Katelijneplein and Vismarkt in the center of Brussels (BE) with 240 stands, ice-skating rink, rides and lots more.

**Through Jan. 6:** *Disney on Ice*, ice-skating shows with as theme Walt Disney fairy tales at Brabanthallen in Den Bosch (NL). Information: 31 (0)73-6293911. Entry: between €19.50 and €25.50.

**Through Jan. 8:** *Christmas at Palace Het Loo* near Apeldoorn (NL). Visitors can see what Christmas used to be like with the Dutch Royal Family for the past 300 years. Entry: €9; children (6-17) €3. Visit [www.paleishetloo.nl](http://www.paleishetloo.nl) or call 31 (0)55-5772400 for more information. Included is a visit to the exhibition “Brides at Het

Loo”.

*Winterland* at Vrijthof in the center of Maastricht (NL). The square is transformed into a large ice-skating rink. There is an old-fashion steam carousel, stands with glühwein, hot chocolate and winter food.

**Through Jan. 9:** *Christmas at Huis Doorn* in Doorn (NL). Huis Doorn owes its international renown mainly to the former German Kaiser Wilhelm II. When in 1918 his army revolts and the German defeat in the Great War is only a matter of days, Wilhelm flies to the Netherlands which had remained neutral during the war. From 1920 until his death in 1941 he resides in Huis Doorn, an estate situated in the heart of Holland. The contents of the house once furnished the private wings in the royal residences in Berlin and Potsdam. The house is now a museum with imperial flavour. Until Jan. 9, the house is in Christmas atmosphere and open every day, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Entry: € 5.50; children €1.

## Holiday Shopping and The Netherlands tax and customs issues

Shopping in Europe is one of the unique benefits associated with living in The Netherlands especially during the holiday season. Everyone knows that you may obtain VAT paperwork at the USAG-Schinnen DMWR VAT office for large purchases on the local economy. Unfortunately, there are a couple of tax and customs considerations to keep in mind when bringing items purchased outside of the country into The Netherlands.

The first question to ask is whether you purchased the goods **in a European Union (EU) country**. If you bought an item on the economy in an EU country *and* paid the local purchase tax, you can bring the item into The Netherlands without paying additional tax. There are limitations regarding cigarettes, alcohol, plants and meat products. Border customs officials may request you show proof of purchase and

require you to show that the items are for personal use and not for business purposes.

A note of caution for those of you who wish to purchase expensive furniture items this holiday season. Some merchants in Belgium and Germany advertise tax-free purchases in their countries. Unfortunately, the Dutch Ministry of Finance does **not** recognize tax-free purchases by NATO forces personnel stationed in The Netherlands on the economy outside of The Netherlands. Dutch Customs may require you to pay the VAT on the full value of your purchase.

Dutch customs regulations permit tax-free purchases of €175 for items purchased **in a non-EU country**. The law makes no distinction whether the items were purchased tax-free. The exemption applies per-

person--a couple may not share the exemption for a high priced item. The exemption applies to your total purchases acquired while shopping outside The Netherlands. Unfortunately, you must report your purchases to customs officials at the border when the value of your purchases exceeds \$175, and pay the import taxes immediately. You will be taxed on the full value of the item; not merely the value over €175.

For more information check out the *Law in the Netherlands and You* publication located on the NeLC webpage. You may also contact the NeLC at DSN 364-6204 when you have a specific question concerning Dutch customs and taxes and their application to you.

***USAG SCHINNEN TRI-BORDER  
SEP COMMITTEE  
PRESENT  
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY  
“REMEMBER! CELEBRATE! ACT!  
A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF!!!”***

*The annual King  
Holiday affords  
us all an  
opportunity to  
reflect upon the  
past while seeking hope,  
determination and  
an opportunity to  
act upon the  
promise of the  
Future*



***GUEST SPEAKER: MR DEXTER GRIFFIN***

***WHAT: A TRIBUTE TO DR. KING/A COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY***

***WHERE: INTERNATIONAL INN BRUNSSUM, NL***

***WHEN: 17 JANUARY 2006/TIME: 1130- 1300 HRS***

***DISPLAYS, SONGS, VIDEO***

***MENU: LUNCHEON /BEVERAGES***

***PRICE: 10 Euros***

***POC: SFC D.M WILLIAMS DSN: 360-7534***

***MR. JERRY FRANCIS DSN: 360-7445***

***MR. KEN GIBSON DSN: 360-7494/COMM: 046-443-7494***